



**Statement delivered by Ms. Josie-Ann Dongobir, Charge d’Affaires to the
Permanent Mission of the Republic of Nauru to the United Nations at the
United Nations 2023 Water Conference
22 to 24 March 2023**

Check against delivery

Distinguished Heads of States and Governments,
Ministers, Excellencies,

On behalf of the Republic of Nauru, I take this opportunity to congratulate the distinguished Co-Presidents, His Excellency Emomali Rahmon, President of the Republic of Tajikistan and His Majesty King Willem-Alexander of the Netherlands on their leadership of the UN 2023 Water Conference.

Nauru aligns itself with the statements delivered by Cuba on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, Samoa on behalf of AOSIS, Fiji on behalf of the PIF and the Tuvalu on behalf of the PSIDS.

Nauru welcomes the 2023 Conference for the comprehensive Review of Implementation of the UN Decade for Action on Water and Sanitation (2018-2028), and we pledge our commitment to the Water Action Plan. Access to safe, reliable, affordable, secure, and sustainable water supply is critical to our socio-economic

development and achieving our aspirational goals as underlined in Nauru's National Sustainable Development Strategy (NSDS 2019 – 2025).

Unfortunately, water scarcity is a daily, lived reality for the people of Nauru. Our freshwater sources are limited and unsustainable and these challenges will be further exacerbated as a consequence of the adverse impacts of climate change.

Excellencies,

We all agree that Water is life and is critical in the lives of all people. Hence, it is of deepest concern that, to date, 60% of households in Nauru are without adequate rainwater capture and storage systems. The Government of Nauru has distributed 200 freshwater storage tanks in the community and the next steps will involve the installation of new, and the repairing of existing, rainwater systems at the household level. Furthermore, the Government will assist households with the dredging of water wells for non-potable use and reduce the demand for freshwater. These projects aim to help fill the gaps and reduce the demand on desalinated water.

Excellencies,

Nauru strives to implement multiple strategies to address our challenges. These strategies focus on storage for rainwater, quality and access of groundwater and production and distribution of desalinated water to meet national needs. The Sustainable Urban Development Project supported by the Asian Development Bank, will establish new, and update existing, water and sanitation regulatory codes. A national Water Quality Framework has also been developed. However, these actions will be inadequate if we cannot take bolder action.

Nauru recently launched the Higher Ground Initiative (HGI) which aims to provide housing for its citizens and critical infrastructure on much higher ground, away from the low lying coastal areas. The HGI is Nauru's national climate adaptation response and plans to integrate rainwater harvesting system with water use efficiency. The Initiative is an ambitious one that aims to see a modern, reticulated water system that provides clean drinking water to residents.

Nauru is of the view that climate-related disasters involve water: too much or too little of it. The link between water and climate change is clear and we stress the importance of the global community urgently addressing the ever-worsening climate crisis to address the water challenges we face. In that light, Nauru calls upon the Secretary General to appoint a Special Representative on Climate and Security, and to immediately undertake an assessment of the UN's capacity to respond to climate and water-related disasters.

Excellencies,

Nauru has made progress in addressing primary concerns, but much more needs to be done. We need to develop and implement sustainable water management policies and strategies to address the present and emerging issues on future water supplies. Access to development financing, remains a core challenge, in addressing Nauru's water needs.

Nauru calls on the international community to adopt the Multidimensional Vulnerability Index (MVI) and take a leap forward to ensuring the global development financing is practical and effective. As a SIDS, our sustainable development aspiration will never be realized if we do not address our unique

circumstances and vulnerabilities. The MVI provides the avenue to tailored, financing solutions for SIDS. We look forward to working with the global community to ensure that the objectives of the Decade for Water action will be met for all.

Tubwa kor. I thank you.